

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the above-identified application in view of the present amendment is respectfully requested. Claims 1, 2, 5, 6, and 8-12 have been rejected as anticipated by Dowe, U.S. Patent No. 4,659,881. Claims 4 and 7 have been rejected as unpatentable over Dowe in view of Chuang, U.S. Patent No. 6,166,662. Claim 3 has been allowed.

Twice amended claim 1 recites the first membrane (30) applying a first return force to the depressible member (20) such that the first return force is reducing as the depressible member (20) is moving in the first direction (22) simultaneously as the second membrane (40) is applying a second return force that is also reducing as the depressible member (20) is moving in the first direction (22) (Specification, page 9-11, lines 3-24, 1-23, and 1-20). In the multidome multistage switch assembly of Dowe, when the push button is moved in the direction (X), at no time do both the outer dome (7) and the inner dome (9) both reduce the return force simultaneously (See Fig. 5). Claim 1 does not raise a new issue since the Dowe reference has been in the record of this case throughout prosecution. Claim 1, as well as claims 2 and 4-10 which depend from claim 1, are in condition for allowance.

Amended claim 11 recites the first membrane (30) applying a first return force to the depressible member (20) such that the first return force is reducing as the depressible member (20) is moving in the first direction (22) simultaneously as the second membrane (40) is applying a second return force

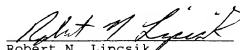
that is also reducing as the depressible member (20) is moving in the first direction (22) (Specification, page 9-11, lines 3-24, 1-23, and 1-20). In the multidome multistage switch assembly of Dowe, when the push button is moved in the direction (X), at no time do both the outer dome (7) and the inner dome (9) both reduce the return force simultaneously (See Fig. 5). Claim 11 does not raise a new issue since the Dowe reference has been in the record of this case throughout prosecution. Claim 11, as well as claim 12 which depends from claim 11, are in condition for allowance.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the claims by the current amendment. The attached page is captioned "Version with markings to show changes made."

In view of the foregoing, allowance of the above-identified application is respectfully requested.

Please charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment in the fees for this amendment to our Deposit Account No. 20-0090.

Respectfully submitted,


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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1 and 11 have been amended, as follows:

1. (Twice Amended) An apparatus comprising:

a depressible member having an unactuated condition, said depressible member being movable to an actuated condition from said unactuated condition;

a first membrane connected with said depressible member, said first membrane resisting movement of said depressible member from said unactuated condition to said actuated condition, said first membrane further providing an increasing return force urging said depressible member to said unactuated condition as an operator moves said depressible member from said unactuated condition to said actuated condition; and

a second membrane resisting movement of said depressible member to said actuated condition, said second membrane further providing an increasing return force to said depressible member as the operator moves said depressible member to said actuated condition;

said depressible member initially moving relative to said second membrane in a first direction,

said first membrane initially resisting movement of said depressible member without said second membrane resisting movement of said depressible member, and thereafter said first membrane resisting movement of said depressible member simultaneously with said second membrane, said first and

second membranes providing a tactile sensation to the operator due to a reduction in the combined return forces applied to said depressible member by said first and second membranes after said first and second membranes resist movement of said depressible member simultaneously,

said first membrane applying a first return force to said depressible member such that said first return force is reducing as said depressible member is moving in said first direction simultaneously as said second membrane is applying a second return force that is also reducing as said depressible member is moving in said first direction.

11. (Amended) An apparatus comprising:

a depressible member being movable in a first direction from an unactuated condition to an actuated condition;

a first membrane connected with said depressible member, said first membrane resisting movement of said depressible member from said unactuated condition to said actuated condition, said first membrane further providing an increasing return force urging said depressible member to said unactuated condition as an operator moves said depressible member from said unactuated condition to said actuated condition; and

a second membrane resisting movement of said depressible member to said actuated condition, said second membrane further providing an increasing return force to said

depressible member as the operator moves said depressible member to said actuated condition;

said first membrane and said second membrane providing a tactile sensation to the operator due to a reduction in the combined return forces applied to said depressible member by said first and second membranes,

said first membrane being movable to a first condition wherein said first membrane resists movement of said depressible member, said second membrane not resisting movement of said depressible member when said first membrane is moved to said first condition,

said first membrane being movable to a second condition wherein said first membrane resists movement of said depressible member, said second membrane resisting movement of said depressible member when said first membrane is moved to said second condition,

said first membrane applying a first return force to said depressible member such that said first return force is reducing as said depressible member is moving in said first direction simultaneously as said second membrane is applying a second return force that is also reducing as said depressible member is moving in said first direction.